

Fostering Digital Skills

Resources

This document contains links to key resources from the 'Fostering Digital Skills' online course.

In partnership with:



Support by:



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Module 1: Understanding

Digital Spotlight: Health and Wellbeing

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Must do

Have fun online
Enjoy the benefits of digital technology together. For younger children, this could be playing their favourite game as a family. Your child may love to show off their gaming skills or teach you the latest gaming tips. You could connect with older children by watching each other funny cat videos. Or if you have a smart TV, play a board game every morning at breakfast time. It's OK not to know how to do all these things - ask the kids for help! This is an opportunity for you to take the initiative and use devices for family bonding. You could complete a [Family Discussion](#) about how everyone uses technology.

Influence the influencers
Who does your child look up to online? Try asking who their favourite person is, and why. For example, this could be a gamer who live streams their games, or a creator on social media. Does watching this person make your child feel good about themselves? If not, help them identify some new online role models.

Guard against manipulation
No-one likes to be manipulated, do they? Ask your child what they think of techniques such as notifications, videos that autoplay and the ability to see how many 'likes' someone else got for an online post. Can they see the manipulation at all? You can help your child become more aware of this. Ask everyone in the house to take a note of how many times in the day they pick up their phone or tablet. Ask particularly ask them to think about why they picked it up, and whether it was something they consciously decided to do. Then compare notes! You may find it helpful to know you exist our guide on [behavioural nudging](#).

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Digital Spotlight: Health and Wellbeing

Digital Spotlight: Self Image and Identity

Fostering Digital Skills

Must do

Be the change
Be aware of how you talk about your own or other's bodies. Praising children for being beautiful or noticing how someone looks on TV can reinforce beauty as a virtue. Explain to your child that many online images are doctored. They could think about it as another type of fake news. Talk with your child about how they choose their online identity - for example, username and picture. Ask how they reflect their own personalities online, and how they deal with pressure to conform. Read our [guide to responsible online body image](#).

Create a positive environment
Your child's online environment can have a significant impact on how they feel about themselves. Talk to your child about making critical choices online. For example, following the channels or influencers they follow to ensure they're choosing ones that make them feel good. Turning their friends list too. Where a platform gives the option, check if you can hide measurements that show how many likes a post has.

Could do

Change your profile
Some social media platforms profile their users, which includes their interests. They use this information to present more personalised content and adverts. On some platforms, you can see how you've been profiled and change it, so you see less content on certain topics if your child sees an advert they don't like. They may be able to view the reasons why they're being shown the advert. They may be able to say they don't want to see adverts like this again.

Don't do

Avoid thinking about it
If a car recommendation person decides to look themselves or family members up online, they may find information that is worrying or upsetting. Plan how you can support your child to manage the potential risks and rewards, before it happens.

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Digital Spotlight: Self Image and Identity

Conversations about Digital: Understanding

Fostering Digital Skills

Health and wellbeing
Knowing how to use digital technology in a way that benefits health and wellbeing.

Family conversation starters with...

...younger children
Why do films, games and apps have age restrictions? Does your child remember that children need parental protections online? Can they tell you some of the reasons for age restrictions e.g. violent content?

...older children
How do you use digital technology for positive mental wellbeing? For example, do you use any apps to make you feel better when you're feeling down? Does your child describe strategies for managing their mental wellbeing, including how they use technology? How do they use social media to get help and information online for mental wellbeing? Do they understand that there is online content which is not trustworthy?

Resources to help your child develop this skill
[Wellbeing apps guide for kids](#)

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Conversations about Digital: Understanding

The following conversation starters can help gauge the level of understanding of each child in the family. Choose a topic for a whole family conversation, for example, at mealtimes. These questions are specially designed to help gauge the skills and understanding of each child. Allow all children to discuss their opinions. See the additional resources if a child needs help developing their skills and knowledge.

Digital Dice Dilemma

How about playing the [Digital Dice Dilemma](#) with your foster child? Alternatively, check out [A Positive Start](#) activity.

Resources

- [Social networking and messaging apps](#)
- [UKCIS Digital Passport](#)
- [Supporting care experienced young people online](#)
- [Inclusive Digital Safety advice hub](#)
- [Connecting Safely Online advice hub](#)
- [Online safety advice by age group](#)
- [Device safety settings checklist](#)
- [Screen time](#)
- [Wellbeing apps for kids](#)
- [Fake news](#)
- [Find the Fake Quiz](#)
- [Radicalisation](#)

Module 2: Empowering

Digital Spotlight: Online Bullying

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Must do

Look out for the signs

Your child might be reluctant to tell you that they are worried about online bullying so it's important to look out for the signs:

- Stopping using their electronic devices suddenly or unexpectedly
- Seeming nervous or jump when using their devices, or becoming obsessive about being constantly online
- Any changes in behaviour such as becoming sad, withdrawn, angry, or lashing out
- Reluctance to go to school or take part in usual social activities
- Unexplained physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach aches
- Avoiding discussions about what they're doing online or who they're talking to

Be prepared

Is your child ready to respond to online bullying? Ensure they know how to block, mute or report another user to the platform. Equally important is to help them recognise that an immediate emotional response might not be the best response. Discuss with your child what strategies they can use to defuse an online argument (if that's what it is), or decide what to block, reply, ignore, apologise or do something else to protect themselves and others online.

Read our guide on talking to [vulnerable children about online bullying](#).

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Digital Spotlight: Online Bullying

Digital Spotlight: Copyright and Ownership

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Must do

Do the right thing

Don't download or share music, films or TV programmes without paying for them. Ask permission from other people before sharing a photo tagging them in a video or sharing information about them online. This shows your child that it's important to respect other people's digital content.

Could do

Talk about consequences

Young people may be unaware that there can be serious consequences for using someone else's content. Downloading copyrighted materials without paying for it is illegal, and there are prosecutions. Setting up a deceptive fake profile is normally against the community terms of social media platforms. Online impersonation can be a criminal or civil offence. And it can cause hurt and distress to people whose content is stolen. Check out our resources for parents on the [dangers of fake profiles](#).

Don't do

Ignore it

If your child is legally downloading content, talk about why they're doing it. What kind of content do they want, and how can you help them to access it legally?

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Digital Spotlight: Copyright and Ownership

Conversations about Digital: Empowering

Fostering Digital Skills

Online bullying

Knowing how to respond if you are bullied or you see someone else being bullied online.

Family conversation starters with...

...younger children





How can you show someone you're a good friend online? Does your child describe healthy ways to nurture their friendships, such as congratulating someone when they've done well in a game? Or does your child describe, for example, that they should 'like everything a friend posts, whether they genuinely like it or not'?

Resources to help your child develop this skill

[Cyberbullying advice for young people and digital friends!](#)

...older children

If you see someone being bullied online, what are your options? Has your child thought about the consequences of staying silent, or different ways they could help someone who is being bullied, or engage other people to stand up to bullying? Your child may have been bullied using negative views about children with care experience. Or they might have had their care status shared online without their permission as an attempt at harassment. Does your child feel confident in responding to bullying?

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Conversations about Digital: Empowering

Digital Family Quiz

How about running an online [Digital Family Quiz?](#)

Resources

- [Digital resilience toolkit](#)
- [Parental controls](#)
- [Setting up tech safely](#)
- [Having meaningful conversations](#)
- [Family agreements](#)
- [Talking to vulnerable children about online bullying](#)
- [Cyberbullying advice for young people](#)
- [What is a Friend?](#)
- [Dangers of digital piracy](#)
- [Downloading and viruses](#)

Module 3: Nurturing

Digital Spotlight: Online Relationships

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Must do
Give your child these top tips

Beware of anyone you meet online who:

- Wants to connect with you because they are a friend of a friend? Check if your friend actually knows this person.
- Asks you for personal information, photos or videos or seems to know a lot about you even though you've never met.
- Asks you to livestream yourself or other children.
- Sends you photographs or videos of themselves, or anything that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- Wants to talk to you in private or on a different platform or asks you to use a headset instead of speakers.
- Gives you money gifts, game cheats or pays for in-game items, or offers ways for you to make money.
- Asks you to keep a secret or wants you to trust them more than other people you trust.
- Tells you you are special or that they are in love with you.
- Asks you or threatens you to make you do something that makes you feel uncomfortable. This is not OK, even if other people say that it's fine.

Try our [Trust Buster tips](#) to talk to your child about online grooming and other issues. Older children should be able to explain to you how to manage their privacy settings on social media.

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Digital Spotlight: Online Relationships

Digital Spotlight: Misinformation

Fostering Digital Skills

Must do
Get the basics in place

Think critically about everything you see online. Who wrote this and do I trust them? Is the content up to date? Has a photograph been shown out of context? How credible are the claims that are made, and would it be possible to check the evidence? And always read the full article (and look at other people's comments) before sharing something. See our [Safety checklist](#) for lots more tips.

Understand that this is about emotions, not facts
Help young people to consider how online content makes them feel - the stronger the emotion, the more conscious effort is needed to recognise any manipulation.

Control the narrative
A key danger is not one single 'fake news' story. It's about receiving a narrow stream of one-sided content. Technology can play a role in channelling someone into extreme online content. Talk to your child about who they follow online. Changing who you follow online can also have a significant positive impact on wellbeing. On some platforms you can see how you've been 'nudged' such as what topics the platform thinks you're interested in. Changing the topics should change what content is in your news feed and which adverts you see. You may be able to switch off personalised content and adverts, if preferred. For younger children, apps which video channels they can follow and turn off autoplay. Balance your information environment by actively seeking different perspectives on a topic so that you are exposed to different points of view, but stay within mainstream content. Check our [Safety checklist](#).

In partnership with:

Digital Spotlight: Misinformation

Conversations about Digital: Nurturing

Fostering Digital Skills

Managing relationships
Knowing how you can use digital technology to support healthy relationships.

Family conversation starters with...

...younger children
What is the difference between liking someone and trusting someone, online? Who's your favourite person to follow online? Would you always trust them?
Can your child explain the difference between liking and trusting? For example, they might trust a teacher at school, even if they don't like them.

...older children
How easy is it to disagree with someone in an online group? What can you do if you don't feel comfortable with the conversation?
How confident is your child about removing themselves from a harmful situation? Do they have strategies to manage this risk? Can your child differentiate between a friend they've fallen out with, and someone who stalks them?

Resources to help your child develop this skill
[Childline](#), [Internet Matters](#), and [Trust Buster tips](#).

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Conversations about Digital: Nurturing

Trust Buster

Fostering Digital Skills

Digital parenting is ever-evolving. The challenges and solutions of parenting in a digital world are noted in relationships, not technology. Building and maintaining a strong relationship is the foundation for nurturing children in their online lives. The Trust Buster checklist may help you think about ways to build trust with your foster child in relation to digital technology.

Create a 'Trust Buster' graphic which includes checklist below and the Trust Buster tips.

Read the 10 statements below and consider if you agree with them.

	Strongly disagree		Strongly agree
1. My foster child and I use digital technology for fun, such as playing games or sharing family videos.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I have agreed with my child how I monitor their online activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I regularly monitor what my foster child does online.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. A foster child needs to earn my trust.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I follow the same digital rules as I give my foster child. (For example, not using a device at mealtimes.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. My foster child knows I won't comment if they reveal sensitive problems to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. My foster child will talk about technology only when something bad has happened or I want my child to switch off.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I do not trust my foster child to make good decisions online.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. In my house, the same digital rules apply to foster children and my own children (and I will explain why).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. My foster child and I use digital technology to learn together.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. I set digital boundaries but don't always follow through.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Now read the Trust Buster tips for nurturing or trusting digital relationship with your foster child.

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Trust Buster

Connecting Safely Family Activities

For younger children or young people with additional needs, introduce the [Connecting Safely Online Reward Chart](#). For older children, you may find the [Connecting Safely Online Storyboard](#) is a good way to help your child learn how to deal with issues such as inappropriate behaviour online.

Resources

- ['What if?' Scenarios](#)
- [Online reputation](#)
- Reverse image search: [Google Images](#) or [TinEye](#)
- [What is peer pressure?](#)
- [Are they really strangers?](#)
- ['I wish my carer knew...'](#)
- [Nudes and sexting](#)
- [So you got naked online?](#)

Reporting:

- You can report child sexual abuse imagery to [Internet Watch Foundation](#) (IWF)
- Young people aged 13+ can report their own images using the IWF and ChildLine [ReportRemove tool](#)
- Online child sexual abuse/exploitation should be reported to [CEOP](#)

Module 4: Flourishing

Digital Spotlight: Online Reputation

Must do

Get in control
Help young people to get in control of their online reputation. This means checking your friends lists and privacy settings on all apps, games and sites so that you are comfortable with who can see what you post. Some sites enable you to automatically delete content when a certain time is reached (e.g. 6 months old). There are also apps that will do this for you. On some social media sites, your profile is public. To carefully consider your username, profile picture and bio. If you need to remove some online content, ask the person who shared it to delete it. If it wasn't you or report to the platform if needed. If you run into problems, check out <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/online-reputation>. See our <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/online-reputation>.


Could do

Turn it around
Help your child's teenager create a positive online reputation that will enable opportunities in future. A young person may want to think about an issue they are passionate about, showcase their photography skills, or run online fundraisers for local causes. They could create a profile on a career website, to evidence their research, skills or volunteering experience to potential employers. Please note that for some case experienced young people there may be additional considerations in creating any online content that will be public. It's important to ensure your child is safe and secure and that you both have a conversation with their social worker. They can undertake an individual risk assessment if necessary to include in your family safety planning.




Don't do

Overshare
Consider carefully before sharing about any of your children online. This includes sharing anecdotes, photographs, baby pictures etc., especially if you haven't asked for their consent first. And consider the security implications of sharing information such as school name, date of birth, home town etc. This kind of information can be used for fraud and purposes or to identify or target your child. Talk to your child about what they share online. Young people can show their vulnerability online without realising it - for example requesting feedback on images or content, sharing their own status, talking about problems at school, or feeling lonely. This could attract people with harmful intentions.



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Report for:

Digital Spotlight: Online Reputation

Digital Spotlight: Privacy and Security

Must do

Set a strong password
Your password is your first line of defence online. Make it a strong one! The best way to create a strong password is to combine 3 random words e.g. kettlejaghdia. Add numbers if you like. Avoid predictable passwords such as dates, family and pet names. On mobile devices, always set a pin code. You can use biometrics too such as your fingerprint. Sometimes passwords can be released through data breaches. Check <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/online-reputation> to see if your passwords are out there. If so, change them immediately.

Protect what's important
Would you care if someone else got into your online bank account? What about if they controlled your email? What would you do if you lost access to photos and videos stored in the cloud? Use an extra code as well as your password for important accounts. This is called 2 factor authentication (2FA). It's easier than it sounds. You might already use 2FA to log into your bank online. Most social media platforms, email services, cloud storage services and lots more use 2FA. Log in and look at your security settings in the app to find out how to turn it on. Do it now and you won't be the person on social media saying "My account got hacked. Don't open a message from me!" Please! Check out the NCSC resource to <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/online-reputation>.

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Report for:

Digital Spotlight: Privacy and Security

Conversations about Digital: Flourishing

Online reputation
Thinking about how your behaviour online influences what other people think of you.




Family conversation starters with...

...younger children
Should you ask someone's permission before you share a photo of them online? Why?
Checking that your child understands about asking for and giving consent. Giving consent means saying yes with words and your body. For example, if someone says yes but looks upset, they haven't really given consent. It's important when online because consent can be easily shared.




...older children
What can you do if you shared something online that you later regret?
Can your child tell you any things they would do to remove something they weren't happy with? Do they have a clear idea of the image they want to project online?

Resources to help your child develop this skill
<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/online-reputation>



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Report for:

Conversations about Digital: Flourishing

Reporting Reminder

What	Report to
Child sexual abuse imagery and videos	Internet Watch Foundation Young people aged 13+ can report their own intimate images and videos using the ChildSexOff: Report Online tool.
Child sexual abuse and exploitation	NCSC
Terrorism and violent extremism	Government reporting online
Hate crime	Twitter
Fraud and scams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forward suspicious emails to: scams@ukncsc.gov.uk Forward scam texts to 7726 (it's free). Report suspicious websites to the NCSC. You can also contact Action Fraud or Scam Solutions about fraud.
Online pirated content	PACT
Harmful but legal content	Report this to the platform. You can also get help at https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/online-reputation .
Professional's Online Safety Hotline - general online safety advice for the child's workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0544 381 4773 Our email address: help@profoffline.com https://www.profoffline.com/for-professionals/online-safety-hotline

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Report for:




Reporting Reminder

Throughout the course we've referred different ways to report illegal content online.

Here's a reminder.

Digital Skills Snapshot

How confident are you and your children in your digital skills? Take a look at the digital activities below. Tick all those you have done or would feel confident to do. Do the same with your children: what skills do they already have (if appropriate), and what will they need?

Problem solving

Find solutions to problems using digital tools and online services

Watch a video to find out how to fix something

Use a wellbeing app, such as for relaxation exercises

Find bus or train times online

Post a question in a forum or text chat with a support agent when I need help with something online

Use common office applications, such as word processing and spreadsheets confidently

Transacting

Apply for services, buy and sell, and manage transactions online

Pay a bill online



Use an online banking or budgeting app

Set up 2 factor authentication to secure my online accounts




Buy a train or ticket

Feel confident you would recognise when a text is a scam



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Report for:

Digital Skills Snapshot

Resources

- [Digital skills \(LearnMyWay\)](#)
- [Parental controls](#)
- [Promoting positive body image](#)
- [Managing online identity](#)
- [Creating passwords and usernames](#)
- [Recovering a hacked account \(NCSC\)](#)
- [Create your cyber action plan \(NCSC\)](#)